

ADVOCATES

Partnering for Solutions—2007 Annual Conference

Lisa S. Vosburgh, Editor

On April 20, 2007 the South Carolina Children's Foster Care Review Board held its Annual Conference in Columbia. This year's meeting focused on the importance of partnerships in the child welfare community.

The opening session, "Domestic Violence: How it Impacts Children and Families" was presented by Thomas J. Leclair, Resource Attorney at the Children's Law Center, USC School of Law. Mr. Leclair presented valuable information on recognizing and assessing the impact of domestic violence on children placed in foster care as a result of abuse and neglect.

Family Court Judges George McFaddin, Jr., Third Judicial Circuit, and Jerry Vinson, Jr., Twelfth Judicial Circuit participated in the "From the Bench" session. The panel discussed the legal process and their role in the foster care system.

Ron Rossi, Review Board 13B, was presented 2006 Review Board Member of the Year Award, and Greenville Review Boards 13B and 13C were co-winners of the Review Board of the Year Award.

Dr. Kathleen Hayes (pictured right), Director, South Carolina Department of Social Services, spoke during lunch and shared her vision for the future of DSS.

Beth Humphries, Vice-President, Greenville Foster Parent Association (FPA) and member of Review Board 13B, shared her experiences as a foster mother and a review board member, stressing the importance of the Review Board's partnership with local FPA's.

Vernon McCurry, Chairperson, State Board of Directors, facilitated the afternoon session "Community Issues—Community Solutions." Review Board members shared common issues and discussed strategies for developing solutions.

Many thanks to staff and volunteers for another successful Annual Conference.



South Carolina Governor's Office Children's Foster Care Review Board

Mark Sanford, Governor

Volume 21, Issue 2
Summer 2007



**KATHLEEN HAYES, PH.D.,
NAMED DSS DIRECTOR.**

On February 23, 2007, Governor Mark Sanford nominated Dr. Kathleen Hayes of Columbia as Director of the Department of Social Services. Prior to her nomination, Dr. Hayes served as Chief of Staff at the Department of Juvenile Justice since 2003. Dr. Hayes' extensive career in child welfare has included service as the coordinator for Nexuskids and the Director of S. C. Families for Kids, as well as serving as the Director of Adoption Services at DSS from 1985 to 1995.

Children's Foster Care Review Board Mission Statement

The Foster Care Review Program provides an external system of accountability and advocacy for children and families involved with the foster care system. The Division utilizes panels of community volunteers to promote safe, permanent homes for children in foster care in a timely manner and to increase public awareness regarding the impact of child abuse and neglect.

Inside this Issue:

Directly Speaking . . . Details from Denise	2
Strictly by the Board— News from the State Board of Directors	3
Developing a National Voice	4
Committed To Kids! Smiling New Faces	5
Foster Care Review News and Views: <i>Is Your Board on Track?</i>	6
Recruitment and Retention of Foster Parents	7
Foster Facts— <i>Waiting on Reform</i>	8
Legal Lines: Legislative and Case Law Updates	9
Review Board Roundup	10

Directly Speaking ... Details From Denise

By Denise T. Barker, Executive Director

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best." Duke Ellington

Several weeks ago I attended the funeral of a friend and professional colleague whom I had known since I first arrived at the Review Board in 1982. Nancy Perry was one of the most consistent, caring, and effective child advocates I have ever known. She may have lost her battle with cancer, but she won countless other battles when it came to keeping children safe - pressing those in power to "do the right thing" for children and doing it all with a smile and leaving you the better for having dealt with her. She was amazing. Nancy's last position in the child welfare arena was that of Director of the SC Association of Children's Homes and Family Services. Her shoes will be hard to fill and many will miss her leadership.

Nancy's advice to me was always to keep going – even when it's really hard and you don't think people like you very much. You learn more from the hard stuff and hard stuff teaches you which relationships you can count on and which ones

need some work. I also believe that amazing changes can happen when we are all working hard – that's why I'm excited about many things that are going on with the Review Board and our many partners around the state and nation. Regional Training, our new Annual Report and a growing voice for foster care review in the national arena all have us working hard.

One particular part of that hard work is my recent appointment to the Permanency Planning Committee of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. I will be representing not only South Carolina, but also the new National Foster Care Review Coalition (NFCRC) as well. This appointment is an exciting opportunity and I will be sharing more about it with you in the coming months.

We are all working hard and it is making a difference for our kids. Nancy would be very pleased. We can't stop now.

Foster Care Review Board Program Staff

Executive Director	Denise T. Barker	dbarker@oepp.sc.gov
Program Director	Beth M. Green	bgreen@oepp.sc.gov
Program Supervisors	Robin C. Campbell Stephen C. Clyburn	rcampbell@oepp.sc.gov sclyburn@oepp.sc.gov
Review Board Coordinators	Karen Airasian Mark Collins Elizabeth Codega Shirel Frazier Rochelle Green Sandy Marcengill Anne Ochylski Millie Qualls Stephanie Spink Michelle White	kairasian@oepp.sc.gov mcollins@oepp.sc.gov ecodega@oepp.sc.gov sfrazier@oepp.sc.gov rgreen@oepp.sc.gov smarcengill@oepp.sc.gov aochylski@oepp.sc.gov mqualls@oepp.sc.gov sspink@oepp.sc.gov mwhite@oeppsc.gov
General Counsel	Michelle Dhunjishah	mdhunjishah@oepp.sc.gov
Staff Attorney	Shannon A. Wiley	swiley@oepp.sc.gov
Research/ Data Manager	Lisa S. Vosburgh	lvosburgh@oepp.sc.gov
Business Manager	Michelle Mooney	mmooney@oepp.sc.gov
Administrative Assistants	Alicia Price DeLisa Stallings	aprice@oepp.sc.gov dstallings@oepp.sc.gov

Strictly by the Board . . . News from the State Board of Directors

By Vernon McCurry, Chairperson, State Board of Directors

The State Board hopes you all enjoyed your summer. We also hope that each of you had a chance to participate in one of the Regional Trainings presented by staff during the heat of August. Reports about the training have been very positive. Special thanks to those local board members who helped staff identify locations for each of the four trainings.

At our quarterly meeting held July 27, 2007, we welcomed our newest State Board member, Ed Andersen from Horry County. Ed represents the First Congressional District on our Board. We are very pleased to finally have all vacancies on the State Board filled. The Public Relations/Legislative

Committee, chaired by Sissy Brock, and the Conference Awards Committee, chaired by Jo Hecker met prior to the full Board meeting on July 27th. New members were welcomed on both committees, and according to committee reports presented at the full Board meeting, there are many exciting plans and ideas going on with both groups. Thank you to those who have agreed to serve. We look forward to working with you.

As always, I thank you all again for the time and commitment you bring to this program. Without you, there would be no external system of accountability for children in foster care in South Carolina.

Judge Aphrodite Kondurous, Family County Judge, 13th Judicial Circuit, was presented with the 2007-2008 Rotary Vocational Award by the Greenville East Rotary Club. Judge Kondurous was recognized for her commitment in serving the children of Greenville County.

Pictured right are: Sue Pross, Club President, Vernon McCurry, Program Chairman, and Judge Kondurous.



State Board Members

Vernon McCurry, Member at-Large, Chairperson (Local Review Board 13C)

D. Ed Andersen, *1st Congressional District* (Local Review Board 15B)

Jo Hecker, *2nd Congressional District* (Local Review Board 5B)

Anne Thayer, *3rd Congressional District* (Local Review Board 10B)

Dorothy ("Dot") Bailey, *4th Congressional District* (Local Review Board 13C)

Martha ("Sissy") Brock, *5th Congressional District* (Local Review Board 7B)

Kenneth Mance, *6th Congressional District* (Local Review Board 3A)

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A REVIEW BOARD VOLUNTEER?

- ◆ You need to be at least 18 years of age and able to commit to spending one day per month reviewing cases. You will be given an opportunity to work with others in the child welfare system to bring about positive changes for foster children.
- ◆ Each review board member is appointed by the Governor, upon the recommendation of the member's legislative delegation, and is required to reside in the judicial district of the local review board upon which he or she serves.
- ◆ For more information, please call the Children's Foster Care Review Program, South Carolina Governor's Office, at 803-734-0480, or contact your local legislative delegation.

Developing a National Voice

By Denise T. Barker, Executive Director

In April of 2006, representatives from several states' foster care review programs met in Albuquerque, New Mexico to form the National Foster Care Review Coalition (NFCRC). Member agencies conduct independent reviews of children in foster care either through administrative or citizen review and fulfill the federal IV-E requirement for periodic, independent review. Whether a review program's mandate is to conduct reviews for all of the children in a state's foster care system or only a percentage of the children, reviews by member organizations provide a comprehensive overview of their state's child welfare system. Each year, NFCRC member agencies conduct thousands of case reviews of our nation's most vulnerable children.

As Executive Director of the Children's Foster Care Review Board, South Carolina Governor's Office, I participate as a member of the steering committee established for this new organization, along with administrators of foster care review programs in Delaware, Maryland, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Colorado and Utah. United as a coalition, South Carolina and other states with independent foster care review systems are able to produce in-depth and objective insight into children's experiences in foster care and the multitude of challenges facing our nation's child welfare system. NFCRC serves a vital role as a national coalition of foster care review programs to ensure the safety, well-being and timely achievement of permanency for children in foster care by informing and influencing individual state and national policy makers as well as the general public.

The NFCRC steering committee met again in Denver, Colorado in August 2006 to establish a mission statement and goals for the new coalition. Using technical assistance from the National Resource Center of Organizational Improvement, NFCRC steering committee members were also able to enhance their understanding of the federal Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) and the manner in which foster care reviews could compliment and supplement the CFSRs data being gathered in each state.

Subsequent meetings of the steering committee resulted in a strategic plan for the coalition, creation of a website, identification of common data elements requested by the Children's Bureau, a test database for information gathering, as well as initial contacts and phone conferences with national child advocacy groups. NFCRC is dedicated to working cooperatively and responsively with the Children's Bureau, individual state agencies and other like-minded organizations and programs in order to improve the provision of services to the children in our nation's child welfare system. In pursuing partnerships with the Children's Bureau and other national organizations, the founding members of NFCRC are committed to ensuring the provision of objective, unbiased information regarding the underlying factors and issues that positively or negatively impact a state's ability to provide the best possible services to children in foster care. Our purpose and motivation is to improve the way our nation serves children in foster care.

Please visit the new website www.nfcrc.net for additional information regarding NFCRC. The steering committee will meet in South Carolina in November to continue planning and coalition development. We look forward to hosting this group and will keep you informed of all exciting developments.

"Celebrating the Solution"

Congratulations Richland County Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

Submitted by Paige Jones, Executive Director, Richland County CASA

Richland County CASA won the 2007 National CASA Diversity Award. Hats off to staff, volunteers, county administration, Board of Directors, Friends of CASA, and to all our community sponsors. This exemplifies our true spirit of collaboration in our journey towards cultural competency. Together we are a powerful voice for children and this community.

Thank you everyone. The award was presented at the National CASA Conference in Orlando, Florida in June.

Committed to Kids! Smiling New Faces

New Review Board Members:

Review Board Member orientations were held on February 26, 2007, March 26, 2007, May 14, 2007, and August 27, 2007 for 39 new local review board members and four review board staff.

Orientation training is mandatory for all incoming board members and is offered at least four times each year. If you have review board members who have not completed this training, please encourage their attendance. Volunteer GALS and Guardian ad Litem staff are welcome to attend; please call to reserve a space. **The next New Member Orientation will be October 29, 2007.**



February 26, 2007

Seated: Linda Ewen, 11A; Celestine Pringle, 15A; Heather Purtle, 12D; and Jackie Gaston (guest).

Standing: Mary Williams, 12B; Diange Rieg, 4B; Monica Hill, 7C; Carol Barnette, 7B; Dan Austin, 4B; Paul Gesimondo, 13D; William Bond, 7C; Mary Halvorson, 15B; Elizabeth Codega, RB Coordinator; Michelle Mooney, RB Business Mgr., and Shannon Wiley, RB Staff Attorney



March 27, 2007

Seated: Monica Farmer, 9F; Remona Jenkins, 5C; Duane Harvin, 5D; Alice Drayton, 9F; and Cherie Cabe, 9D

Standing: Robin Cromer, 10C; Carrie R. Grady, 9A; Roy Walters, 1B; Katherine Duffy, 9C; Raye Dukes, 1B; Dorothy Dixon, 16A; Thomas McNamee, 13B; Beth Humphries, 13B; and Jayne Crisp, 13D



May 14, 2007

Seated: Paulette Handegan, 13A; and Edith Fuller, 3B

Standing: Mari Fisher, 9C; Ron Shephard, 9E; Karen Airasian, RB Coordinator; and Jennifer Bunch, 9F



August 27, 2007

Seated: Susan Bennett, 12A; Katherine Hutto, 4A; and Janet Sherbert, 16A

Standing: Hugh Haynesworth, 16B; Isaac Frasier, 9D; Cathy Herron, 16B; Martha Haynesworth, 16A; Tabby Shelton, 16A; and Willard Branch, 14A

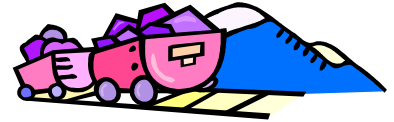
Review Board Staff News and Updates:

We are happy to have **Karen Fleischacker Airasian** join the Review Board staff as Coordinator for the Aiken, Bamberg, Barnwell, and Berkeley County Review Boards. Karen has extensive experience in residential, family preservation, and therapeutic foster care programs, and most recently managed a family-owned restaurant. She is a graduate of Columbia College and earned a Master of Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of South Carolina's School of Medicine.

In February, the Review Board welcomed **Michelle Mooney** to our staff as the new Business Manager and our third staff member named Michelle! Our newest Michelle comes to us after having retired from a career in the Air Force where she developed a wealth of experience in finance and office management. She picked South Carolina to be her new home and we are reaping the benefits! Welcome, Michelle!

Alicia Freeman Price joined the Review Board on June 18, 2007 as our new Administrative Assistant. Alicia, a Columbia native, is married to J.P. who is currently assigned to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, US Navy. They have two boys, eight year old Austin and two year old Wesley. Alicia has jumped in with both feet and we are very happy to have her.

Foster Care Review News and Views: Is Your Board on Track?



By Beth Green, Program Director

It is difficult to believe that more than half of 2007 is behind us and that autumn is now upon us. Thanksgiving will be here before we know it. As the year winds down, I hope that your Local Review Board (LRB) is in the process of completing the 2007 Local Review Board Self Assessment Plan.

The SC Foster Care Review Board's (FCRB) Board of Directors determined several years ago that, in order to effectively promote timely permanent homes for children in foster care, LRB members also needed to be active outside of FCRB meetings. The State Board members identified five activities that they believed would make a difference for children and communities, and compiled these activities into a document called the Local Review Board Self Assessment Plan. I am pleased to report that, during January and February 2007, every LRB submitted a Self Assessment Plan with projected dates for completing each of the five activities listed below:

- Present the FCRB Annual Report at a local legislative delegation meeting
- Submit quarterly reports to the local legislative delegation
- Complete an annual service project to benefit children in foster care
- Attend quarterly partners meetings
- Meet with the Chief Administrative Family Court Judge

How is your board doing? Are you “on track” to complete all, or most, of these activities this year? The State Board hopes that the Self Assessment Plan has been a regular point of discussion at your monthly business meetings. While the information gathered in these reports is important to the FCRB as an agency, this pales in comparison to the ripples created by the consistent and persistent completion of these activities. These ripples are as basic as building relationships with your legislators, your county director, and other local partners in the child welfare system. It also involves education, awareness, meeting needs, prodding the system and collaborating on community issues... ALL of which are good for children.

I commend those boards that are on track for completing the 2007 LRB Self Assessment Plan. If your board has derailed, do not despair as it is never too late to get back on track. The children and your community need you on track, as there is much to be done. Always know that your assigned State Board member and FCRB staff are here to guide, assist and support you; however, we cannot do it FOR you. That's up to you! Thank you for your service to the children of South Carolina. I am constantly amazed at how much children across the state benefit by your being a part of the system.

Foster Parent Training

By Stephen Clyburn, Program Supervisor

Elizabeth Codega and I facilitated foster parent training with the Horry County Foster Parent Association on August 14, 2007. The purpose of the training was to educate the foster parents regarding the role of the Foster Care Review Board, to encourage foster parent participation in the review process, and to provide the foster parents with additional information regarding foster care policies and statutes. The foster parents were also encouraged to work with the Department of Social Services, FCRB, GAL and other entities to advocate on behalf of the children in their homes. More than 40 foster parents attended the training. In addition, three of our great volunteers also attended the training—Mary Beth Halvorson, Nita Sparks and our newest member, Tabby Shelton. In addition to their service to the Foster Care Review Board, these women are also foster parents. The training was followed by a nice meal and great discussion with several foster families about their experiences with the foster care system. It is always a pleasure to meet with foster parents and this meeting was enhanced by the participation of our volunteers. Please contact the Children's Foster Care Review Board at (803) 734-0480 if you are interested in having a foster parent training session in your county.

Recruitment and Retention of Foster Parents

By Stephen Clyburn, Program Supervisor

Beginning in June 2006, partners from the child welfare community and Department of Social Services staff came together for the purpose of formulating recommendations related to the recruitment and retention of foster parents in South Carolina. I had the distinct pleasure of chairing the subcommittee and working with many thoughtful, energetic and intelligent child advocates. Among the members of the subcommittee was our own Rachel Silver from Richland County. Rachel brought a wealth of expertise in advertising and marketing to the group. Her brainchild is the establishment of a statewide foundation for the purpose of supporting the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families in South Carolina.

Over the course of seven meetings the subcommittee members considered the challenges and opportunities faced by the child welfare system in recruiting and retaining foster and adoptive parents. The overriding consensus of the group was that the responsibility for recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents does not rest solely with the Department of Social Services; it is the responsibility of all the partners in the child welfare system. Therefore, it will take all the partners working together to meet the needs of South Carolina's children in foster care.

The recommendations listed below were submitted to the full Child Welfare Advisory Committee on May 17, 2007. Given the complexity of this challenge the subcommittee recommends that DSS establish both short and long-term objectives. The recommendations were well received by the full committee and will be included in the agency's five-year plan.

Short-Term Objectives:

The agency should:

1. Provide training to county directors, foster care licensing supervisors, and foster care licensing workers on marketing and how to create a marketing plan. The training should: a) be facilitated by a marketing professional; b) provide a template/tracking tool; c) include a county breakout session to discuss marketing ideas/plans, and regroup for feedback from the marketing professional; and d) cover targeted recruitment strategies.
2. Create an actual marketing plan.
3. Collaborate "regionally" on marketing efforts (i.e. radio and TV).
4. Engage in quarterly tracking and evaluation of success of the marketing plan at the local and state levels.
5. Utilize E-News to share "best practices" and to brainstorm tactics. (In addition, we discussed having quarterly recruitment coordinator meetings, and the creation and implementation of a communication plan for retention.
6. Conduct standard foster parent exit interviews with tracking for ideas.
7. Facilitate monthly training with the Foster Parent Association.
8. Assess the training and material needs of foster parents.
9. Create strong local Foster Parent Associations with community partners.
10. Create a mentor program for foster parents (i.e. pairing experienced foster parents with new foster parents or those with difficult placements - *Richland County is using this now*).
11. Create business partnerships for goods and services.
12. Create and distribute a newspaper or newsletter.
13. Provide child care for foster parents at Foster Parent Association meetings along with other non-financial incentives.
14. Create a unified message for foster care and adoption.

(continued on page 8)

Foster Facts: Waiting for Reform

From: <http://www.kidsarewaiting.org/reports>

"I am a sophomore in high school, and I have always made good grades, but at the beginning of the year, when teachers find out I'm in foster care, they assume I'm going to be a troublemaker."

South Carolina Foster Youth, Foster Club Member

In South Carolina, 4,885 children in foster care are waiting for reform. Children in foster care would benefit from federal financing reform, which would let states use funds flexibly to provide services before, during and after foster care. Savings would be reinvested to reunite children with their families, place them with adoptive families, or provide guardianships when reunification and adoption are not possible.

Only 54% of federal dollars for child welfare can be spent flexibly to serve South Carolina's children and families. Approximately \$12 million dollars out of a total of \$22 million child welfare dollars are flexible.

What are South Carolina's children in foster care waiting for? (based on data collected in 2005)

- 2,094 (43%) are waiting to be reunified with their birth families (48% nationally)
- 1,655 (34%) are waiting to be adopted (22% nationally)
- Average time foster children have been waiting to be adopted: 45 months (42 months nationally)

Where did South Carolina's children go after leaving foster care in 2005

- 3,150 children aged out of foster care
- 1,515 (48%) returned to their parents
- 377 (12%) were adopted
- 861 (27%) left to live with relatives or via guardianships

Recruitment (continued from page 7)

Long-Term Objectives:

The agency should:

15. Create a five-year plan for recruitment and retention of foster/adoptive homes.
16. Develop collaborative efforts with colleges and universities to recruit interns to provide supportive services to children during Foster Parent Association meetings.
17. Look into a project similar to the "Helping And Lending Outreach Support" project that exists in Charleston County. HALOS is a collaborative effort between the Department of Social Services and many faith-based and business organizations.
18. Present long range goals of two, five, and ten-year needs.
19. Implement targeted recruitment strategies.
20. Follow up on long and short-term issues.
21. Address problems with recruitment and retention.
22. Seek collaboration between public, secular non-profit, and faith-based organizations for the purpose of recruitment and retention of Foster/Adoptive families. This would best be facilitated through the establishment of a statewide foundation.
23. Provide continuous/ongoing education to staff on marketing, recruitment, and retention.
24. Set benchmarks for success.
25. Evaluate progress at two, five, and ten-year intervals.
26. Make recommendations for continuous improvement and make adjustments as needed.

Legal Lines: Legislative and Case Law Updates

By Michelle Dhunjishah, General Counsel

State Legislative Update

The Legislature adjourned in June bringing the first-half of the 117th Legislative Session to a close. Several bills impacting children in foster care are still pending and here are a few of the highlights:

- ♦ Increase Number of Family Court Judges—H.3267. This bill adds three, at-large, family court judges across the state.
- ♦ Incarceration as Ground for Termination of Parental Rights—S.678/H.3548. These bills add incarceration as a ground to terminate parent rights.
- ♦ Methamphetamine Exposure as Ground for Termination of Parental Rights—H.3069. This bill adds exposing a child to methamphetamine manufacture or use as a ground to terminate parental rights.
- ♦ Central Registry of Abuse and Neglect—H.3547. The original version of this bill would require DSS to seek placement on the Central Registry of Abuse and Neglect in cases of physical abuse, severe neglect, and repeated neglect.

Case Law Update

In South Carolina Department of Social Services v. Walter, 369 S.C. 384, 631 S.E.2d 913, the Court of Appeals held that the defendant's equal protection and due process rights were not violated when the Family Court (Pickens County) refused to hold the DSS action in abeyance because of pending criminal charges. This case involved allegations of sexual abuse. The defendant argued that the pending criminal charges would influence his decision to testify and thereby "defend himself" in the Family Court case (since any statement he made in Family Court could be used against him in the criminal case). The Family Court refused to hold the DSS action in abeyance, the defendant did not testify at the merits hearing, and the Family Court found that the defendant had sexually abused the child. When agreeing with the Family Court Judge's decision to go forward with the merits hearing, the Court of Appeals noted "[we] are further mindful of the statutory mandate for an expedited resolution in family court intervention actions. A removal action should be resolved in an expedited manner for the protection of an abused or neglected child."

In South Carolina Department of Social Services v. Roe, 371 S.C. 450, 639 S.E.2d 165, the Court of Appeals affirmed the Family Court's (Oconee County) termination of the birth mother's parental rights on the grounds that she has a diagnosable condition not likely to change within a reasonable time which makes her unlikely to provide minimally acceptable care for the child and that termination of her parental rights is in the child's best interest. The Court of Appeals agreed with the Family Court's conclusion that clear and convincing evidence existed in the expert medical testimony to support termination of the birth mother's parental rights. Finally, the Court reasoned that the evidentiary record taken as a whole, including lay testimony, expert testimony, psychological reports and the guardian ad litem's recommendation, is sufficient to prove that the birth mother is not capable of providing the level of care the child needs.

Worth Waiting For! Adopting a Teenager

Inspiration from a Foster Care Review Board Volunteer (anonymous)

My nephew first joined our family as a foster child at age 15, and joined our family permanently by adoption when he was 17. Our family has been blessed with a son, grandson, nephew, great-grandson, grand-nephew, cousin, brother, and best friend—whom we all love and readily accept as a member of our family. He was in the Honors Program at the university he attended. He graduated magna cum laude in May 2007, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree and he will attend graduate school. He was very active in college and assumed many leadership roles in student government, fraternal organizations, and organizations affiliated with his degree. He was the recipient of many awards and recognitions. We are so proud of him! He fits well into our family and did from the first time we met him.

Every child deserves to live in a safe, loving and permanent family. No child should linger in foster care or leave foster care at age 18 without a permanent family of their own. No child is unadoptable!

Review Board Roundup

Richland County Review Board Volunteers Providing Child Care

By Rachel Silver, Review Board 5C

The urgent need for child care during Foster and Adoptive Parents Association meetings came up during a county partner's meeting last October. Mike Farrell, President of the Richland County Foster Parent Association, expressed his frustration with poor attendance and said foster parents were attributing their absences to lack of appropriate child care. Attendance is important because 70% of Richland County's adoptions last year came from foster families, and that base of families is shrinking. We desperately need to attract and retain more foster families. Ginny Funk-Currie and I were at that partners meeting and we enthusiastically offered our support. From that point, many Richland County Review Board members agreed to join us, and providing child care for the meetings was a huge success from the start.

In January we had only eight foster children, but a special program the next month surprised us with 32 children. March brought us 24 children, and the number rose to 29 in April. One of the foster mothers attended her child's review the following day at my local review board. She told me the Association now has 47 members, more than double what they achieved by the **END** of last year! She was so complimentary of what Richland County Foster Care Review Boards are doing to assist foster parents.

The numbers don't begin to tell the story. The children we love to see, but seldom do, are there to have snacks, play games, tell us about their day (and sometimes their families) and give us hugs for two full hours. One little boy, 10 years old, looks forward to visiting with this 18 month old sister, who lives in another home. He holds her in his lap and helps feed her. Last month, a little girl who was diagnosed with anxiety, overcame her fear and stayed with us throughout the evening, winning the bingo prize at the end of the night. All of the children are unusually helpful, well-behaved and so appreciative of everything we do for them. They give us so much more that we are giving them.

A huge thank you to Ginny Funk-Currie (and her family) and Marisa Kornblut who have been there from the very beginning, donating their time as well as their craft supplies. Jo Hecker has also been a lifesaver, and her crustless sandwiches last month were a big hit! Thanks to Freddie Brown, Tangalen Bennett, Remona Jenkins, and Vicky Vernon for their help and participation. We are grateful for contributions received from Louise McFarland, Minda Miller, Columbia Jewish Family Service, and for Kroger's continuing contribution of \$10 gift certificates each month.

The Child Care Project continues to exceed expectations. Attendance at the August meeting set a new record. Thirty-two well behaved young ones shared an evening of food, story reading, and coloring, cutting and pasting to create a mural garden.

So many review board members have made donations of money, personal time, food and gifts. These contributions are so appreciated by the children, their foster parents and the DSS personnel who work with the Association. The relationships we are building have already begun to help. So thanks for your support—it is very important.

Review Board Volunteers Review Grant Applications

By Denise T. Barker, Executive Director

On September 10, 2007, ten Review Board members came to Columbia and enthusiastically volunteered their time to review grant applications from nonprofit children's service organizations seeking child abuse prevention funds from the SC Children's Trust Fund. This is a great way for local board members to learn about the kinds of programs proposed for communities.

The local review board members who volunteered were: Ed Andersen, 15B; Dot Bailey, 13C; Sissy Brock, 7B; Susan Buckner, 10B; Lois Dennis, 9B; Linda Godfrey, 12B; Beverly Ingram, 11A; Lilibet Lowrance, 13A; Ron Rossi, 13B; and Alyson Wissinger, 6A.

The value of volunteer service to nonprofit agencies was emphasized by the Children's Trust Fund. Hats off to these wonderful Review Board volunteers who gave so generously of their time and talents to make a positive difference for SC Children.

Review Board Roundup (continued)

◆ Review Board 1A:

Orangeburg DSS received a donation of materials for a swing set, but unfortunately there was no one available to construct it.



Upon hearing of the dilemma, Max Kaster and Sam Felder (pictured right) came to the rescue. Foster Care Supervisor Anne Williamson said, "Max and Sam" did a wonderful job! We are so grateful to them." The swing set is in the back of the DSS property in a fence. The swing set and 2 picnic tables are available for caseworkers to have their parent/child visitation out there when weather allows. Way to go guys—what a wonderful example of true community service. *Millie Qualls*

◆ **Review Board 1B:** Review Board members have worked to improve the visitation room at DSS for the children to visit with family members by supplying new toys, diapers, snacks, clothing, and other items. Children are also allowed to keep one toy if they desire. This room has come a long way thanks to Review Board 1B. *Sandy Marcengill*

◆ **Review Board 3B:** Review Board members collected over a hundred dollars worth of schools supplies for the foster children of Sumter/Lee Counties. They have successfully completed this project for several years running. *Mark Collins*

◆ **Review Board 5E:** Review Board members, in collaboration with Junior Leadership of Camden, hosted an Easter Egg Hunt on April 1, 2007 in Historic Camden. Easter baskets were provided to Kershaw County foster children, ages twelve and under, through monetary donations from Review Board members. *Rochelle Green*

◆ **Review Board 7A:** Review Board members provided diapers and underwear for children in foster care in Spartanburg County. On June 5, 2007, Review Board members provided an "appreciation lunch" for DSS Foster Care staff. *Sandy Marcengill*

◆ **Review Board 7B:** Review Board members collected school supplies as part of their annual service project. They delivered them to DSS and rearranged the foster parent area, putting the supplies in order. In addition, the Board actively participates in quarterly partners' meetings, and some Board members attend court hearings. *Stephanie Spink*

◆ **Review Board 7C:** Review Board members collected and provided school supplies for foster children in Spartanburg County. *Sandy Margencill*

◆ **Review Board 9A:** Review Board members gathered school supplies, book bags, and small stuffed animals for foster children in Charleston County. This is a huge project that the Board has taken on and their efforts will make the lives of foster children a little better. Thanks so much to Review Board 9A for their continued efforts in making a child's life better. *Michelle White*

◆ **Review Board 9C:** The Board continues to donate monthly checks to a DSS fund established to help purchase various items for foster children, and has even helped send some children to educational camps. Thanks to all the 9C Board Members who contribute to this fund. *Michelle White*

◆ **Review Board 10B:** Board members gave money to the Anderson County Foster Parent Association for a party to recruit more foster families. They are also planning a Christmas project for Anderson County children in foster care. Board members also attend family court and meet bi-monthly with community partners. *Stephanie Spink*

◆ **Review Board 10C:** Board members created the "Guardian Angel Award" certificate to recognize organizations in Anderson County that assist children in foster care. In August this award was presented to the Loyal Order of the Moose Lodge 2018. Board members are also collecting book bags for Anderson County foster children. *Stephanie Spink*

◆ **Review Board 12B:** This year the Board collected school supplies as part of its Annual Service Project. In addition, Review Board member Beatrice James received book bags filled with goodies from a charitable event sponsored by Methodist churches. Board members attend the quarterly partners' meetings, and in May they presented the Annual Report to the local legislative delegation. *Stephanie Spink*

◆ **Review Boards 13B, 13C, 13D:** Greenville County Review Board members participated in the *Carnival Shoe Night* in Cherrydale. This year personnel from the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office also participated in the event. Many thanks to Melita Graham, RB 13C, who "quarterbacked" this successful effort of collecting funds. Once again, it was a little bit of heaven to witness foster children receiving their own pair of shoes. *Ron Rossi, Member, RB 13B*

◆ **Review Board 14B:** Board members are busy collecting Christmas gifts and other items for children in foster care in Beaufort and Jasper Counties. *Sandy Marcengill*

◆ **Review Board 15A:** Board member Mae Kaple secured monetary donations from local charity groups in Georgetown County to provide a \$50 gift card to each child that entered foster care, and every foster child in school this year. Georgetown DSS staff expressed their appreciation for a great service project that benefits the foster children in Georgetown County. *Rochelle Green*

◆ **Review Board 16A:** Board members collected and donated books to DSS, MTS, and Adoptions. The books will be in each of the visitation rooms for parents to read to their children during visits. Hats off to Review Board 16A for their great gifts! *Michelle White*

South Carolina Governor's Office Children's Foster Care Review Board

1205 Pendleton St., Room 436
Columbia, SC 29201

Visit us on the Web:
**[www.govoepp.state.sc.us/
children/foster.htm](http://www.govoepp.state.sc.us/children/foster.htm)**

Phone: 803-734-0480
Fax: 803-734-1223
Email: lvosburgh@oepp.sc.gov

Review Board Calendar

State Board of Directors	Thurs/Fri	12:00 noon
Strategic Planning Retreat	Oct 18-19	Columbia
Foster Care Review	Mon	10:00 am
New Member Orientation	Oct 29	Columbia
Veterans Day	Nov 12	State Office Closed
Thanksgiving Holidays	Nov 22-23	State Office Closed
Christmas Holidays	Dec 25-26	State Office Closed
New Years Day	Jan 1	State Office Closed
Chairperson's Training	Jan 7	Columbia
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Jan 21	State Office Closed
President's Day	Feb 18	State Office Closed

*"Permanency is not a philosophical process, a plan,
or a foster care placement . . . rather, permanence is
about locating and supporting a lifetime family."*

The Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice

Advocates is published semi-annually by the South Carolina Governor's Office. The deadline for submission of articles for the next issue of *Advocates* (Winter 2007) is January 18, 2008.

Anyone wishing to submit an article should contact *Advocates* editor Lisa Vosburgh. Call 803-734-0474, or send an e-mail to lvosburgh@oepp.sc.gov.

The publisher reserves the right to make the final determination as to the content of each issue. Articles submitted are subject to editing and are not guaranteed inclusion.

NOTICE:
**If you no longer wish to
receive this publication,
please notify us in writing by
January 4, 2008.**